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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/07/30

TAGS: PREL PGOV OSCE GR RS GG

SUBJECT: OSCE CiO S/R Discusses Tbilisi Bureau, Seeks Guidance on OSCE Presence in Georgia

REF: 09 USOSCE 178

CLASSIFIED BY: Daniel V. Speckhard, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: OSCE CiO Special Representative for Protracted Conflicts Charalampos Christopoulos met with Ambassador Speckhard July 28 to discuss intentions to open a CiO Special Representative Bureau in Tbilisi, the OSCE's role in Georgia and developments in Moldova. S/R Christopoulos gave Ambassador Speckhard a copy of a letter recently passed to Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Grigol Vashadze, requesting Georgian support for the establishment of a Bureau of the CiO Special Representative in Tbilisi. In a July 30 follow on call, S/R Christopoulos asked the U.S. to approach the Georgians and Russians in support of the CiO's plans. End Summary

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Re-establishing a (More Limited) OSCE Presence in Georgia

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¶2. (C) The idea for opening the CiO Special Representative's bureau in Tbilisi came about following the June 30 expiration of the mandate for the OSCE Mission to Georgia. S/R Christopoulos reiterated that the offer to renew the OSCE mandate was still on the table for Russia, but that the Tbilisi bureau would function as an alternative in the meantime. Ambassador Speckhard praised the Chairman for her efforts to reach agreement on renewal of the OSCE Monitoring Mission mandate while also maintaining the need for an agreement that did not undermine the territorial integrity of Georgia. In the absence of such an agreement, he commended efforts to develop an interim fix.

¶3. (C) According to S/R Christopoulos the Tbilisi bureau would undertake the following functions, as outlined in a letter from S/R Christopoulos addressed to Georgian Foreign Minister Vashadze:

- Provide logistical support for the CiO Special Representative during visits to the region;

- Represent the OSCE Chairmanship in the Incident and Prevention and Response Mechanisms as mandated by the Geneva International Discussions; and

- Inform the CiO Special Representative in the implementation of projects discussed in the framework of the Second Geneva Working

Group.

¶14. (C) Stephen Young, the former head the OSCE monitoring mission, has been tapped to head up the Tbilisi bureau. He is currently residing in London and, according to S/R Christopoulos, would be ready to travel to Tbilisi immediately. Although S/R Christopoulos had not yet received a response from Tbilisi, he expressed hope that a CiO bureau in Tbilisi could open on August 1 and said he would travel to Tbilisi for the opening.

¶15. (C) If Georgia agrees, the Bureau would be in operation for an initial period of August 1-December 31, 2009, until the end of the Greek Chairmanship of the OSCE. Expenses would be funded by the Greek CiO.

¶16. (C) Ambassador Speckhard asked if S/R Christopoulos had talked to Kazakhstan, to gauge whether or not the Kazakhs would be interested in supporting the continuation of a Tbilisi bureau following their assumption of the OSCE Chairmanship on January 1, 2010. S/R Christopoulos agreed that this was a good idea but felt that it was too early to talk to the Kazakhs. He suggested that we coordinate our message to Kazakhstan on this issue after the bureau is up and running. (Note: Reftel OSCE highlights cable reported that the Greeks have in fact spoken to the Kazakhs about the plan, and that the Kazakhs said that they would be willing to continue this arrangement if the OSCE cannot reach a compromise on re-opening a field mission. End Note)

¶17. (C) Initial reactions to the proposal in the region are still unclear. S/R Christopoulos said that he has spoken with Georgia Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Nabandov, who expressed initial

dissatisfaction with use of the phrase "to the region" noted in the first point of the letter and instead preferred to say "to Georgia." However, his office had not yet received a formal response from the Georgians to the letter.

¶18. (C) S/R Christopoulos asked us to keep the letter confidential, as he had not passed a copy to the Russians. However, he had informed the Russian embassy in Athens of his office's intentions. He also revealed that he will be traveling to Moscow next week and may discuss his plans in more detail during that trip - his fourth trip to Russia since assumption of his role as CiO Special Representative.

¶19. (C) On July 30 S/R Christopoulos called Ambassador Speckhard to inform us that he had been demarched by the Russian Charge d' Affaires in Athens, with respect to the CiO plan to open an office in Tbilisi. The Charge was under instruction to inform the CiO that they did not oppose the opening of the office but that, for the office to play any role in the Geneva process, it would have to have the agreement of all the parties involved. (Comment: This, in effect, means South Ossetia. End Comment) According to the Special Representative, the U.S. could help by urging the Georgians to formally respond to the CiO plan to open the office and by encouraging the Russians to allow the CiO the opportunity to operate freely inside Georgia. He said the EU and the Germans had promised to talk to the Russians as well.

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S/R Views on Next Steps in Georgia

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¶110. (C) S/R Christopoulos recently made a trip to the United States and spoke highly of the substantive meetings arranged on his behalf, including time with the EUR Front Office, NSC and Congress. He noted that the majority of his meetings focused on Georgia and the OSCE's role in Georgia going forward. In particular, he welcomed the creative thinking that characterized the discussion he had with EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary Bryza. He was anxious to hear if there was any further development with respect to the U.S. approach on how an actual role for the OSCE could be maintained in Georgia.

¶111. (C) He also expressed interest in learning whether the OSCE was

discussed during Vice President Biden's recent trip to Georgia, and hoped to find out more about U.S. economic and development aid pledges to Georgia that were announced during that trip.

¶12. (C) On a broad scale, S/R Christopoulos inquired about what the OSCE and the international community should "do about Georgia" in practical terms. He shared his opinion that the Georgians should work to demonstrate that Georgia is taking care of the break-away regions, still views the people of these regions as Georgian citizens, and treats them as part of Georgia. To this end, S/R Christopoulos emphasized building bridges and encouraged the Georgians, South Ossetians and Abkhazians to work together on gas and energy issues. He suggested that they work together on natural gas issues in Gori and also create a joint commission to discuss issues such as potable water and missing persons.

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#### Moldova and Transnistria

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¶13. (C) S/R Christopoulos also spoke briefly about his work on the protracted conflict between Moldova and Transnistria, noting that the current goal was to organize a joint visit to the region before September 22. In a sign of solidarity, the delegation would include S/R Christopoulos, the U.S. Ambassador to Moldova and the EU Special Representative for Moldova. In response to efforts to deny the U.S. Ambassador to Moldova entry, he said that unless all were welcome, the trip would not take place.

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#### Information Request

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¶14. (SBU) Post requests further information from Washington, USOSCE and Embassy Tbilisi in response to the following questions posed by S/R Christopoulos:

-What is the USG position on an OSCE presence in Georgia going forward? Have we given future thought to the possibilities for an OSCE presence in Georgia, beyond the CiO office? Does the U.S. envision a mission, secretariat or some other type of institutional presence (e.g. sub-institutions of the OSCE)?

- Does the USG have recommendations for practical next steps in Georgia? What can the OSCE do to promote progress?  
SPECKHARD